



Drug Cartels and Corruption: How to Stem Violence and Corruption in Mexico

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Abstract

The nations of Central America are facing a threat to both their public's safety and to their political stability due to drug trafficking, violence and corruption; Mexico is no exception. Mexico is a nation that has suffered in the grips of the drug lords who rule over their cartels with an iron fist, violence and abductions have seem to become the norm. There is some evidence that corruption may be present within the police force and it is often difficult to tell between friend and foe, which causes the public to fear reporting dangerous activities that they are witnessing. This research also examines the role in how U.S. Policy both foreign and domestic impacts the relationship that the United States has with Mexico. It seeks to examine possible suggestions to how to stem the drug trade and corruption in the region while assisting in positive sustainable development of Mexico and the US/Mexico relationship. This research through an interdisciplinary approach, seeks to analyze both academic journals, as well as news articles in order to provide a way to solve the gap found in academic research on the topic of the relationship between drugs, violence, and corruption in Mexico; due to a majority of academic articles providing histories and suggestions versus current information or data. This research postulates that by creating and implementing three mitigation strategies there is a possibility of improving stability and safety in the region.

Statement of Purpose

This research seeks to explore the historical and current relationship between various levels of the Mexican government and the Mexican drug cartels. It stands to explore the various levels and types of corruption that are occurring in Mexico and how corruption can be linked to violence and drug trafficking that we are seeing throughout Mexico.

Main Arguments

“Restrictive regulation of freedom of speech substantially reduces the coverage of corruption in the media...Due to decreased monitoring and less effective accountability, the prevalence of corruption might increase and impose high costs potentially on the whole society.”
-Piero Stanig, 2015

Mitigation through United States National and International Policies

U.S. policy both foreign and domestic can have an effect on situations and policies around the globe. This is especially true of our regional neighbors and more specifically Mexico. One such policy is drug laws, laws in the U.S. related to drugs can be very strict with the possibility of prison for many offenses. In relation to this topic it may be possible to discuss policies that decriminalize certain drugs and provide treatment vs prison for those that break the law, this could possibly play a role in lowering prices of drugs thus making their sale not as lucrative; this has previously been suggested in earlier academic works. Previous American policy also allowed for exchanging such plants as opium for other crops that the farmers could sell globally to make a profit. This may only have a small impact as Mexico is only one grower in the region. The upside of the abovementioned policy is that it will allow for profit to flow through the region, provide food resources to the population, and could ultimately impact the national GDP. As well foreign intervention or aid has the possibility of added stipulations that discuss the mitigation of corruption or the implementation of stronger anticorruption laws.

Mitigation through an International Court

A popular suggestion towards fighting corruption around the world is the creation of an International Anticorruption Court that has the ability to be called to be an impartial investigative unit and could have the ability to in some instances be able to prosecute in situations where countries are unable to do so. This international court could play a role in bringing corruption abuses to the public's attention. It could help identify both low level corruption and governmental corruption, which can be a challenge for nations where there is a deep engrained history of corruption. Ultimately an international court would take some time to organize and would face an uphill battle as many countries would believe their sovereignty is being challenged. If a court like the International Criminal Court, that had a focus on corruption could be established it could bring wide-spread attention to the issues linked to corruption but ultimately advice or rulings may not always be heeded by the countries involved.

Mitigation through Education

A two pronged education response is needed to assist in the fight against corruption in Mexico. The first type of education response is an increase in primary school education to assist in reducing poverty and violence, lack of opportunities could be a stressor that drives people to romanticizing the life of drug cartel members. The second type of education needed is one that discusses corruption and its consequences. This is to assist the population in ultimately feeling confident in understanding corruption and providing an arena for empowerment. Education can not solely work on its own and must be completed in tandem with various other types of mitigation.



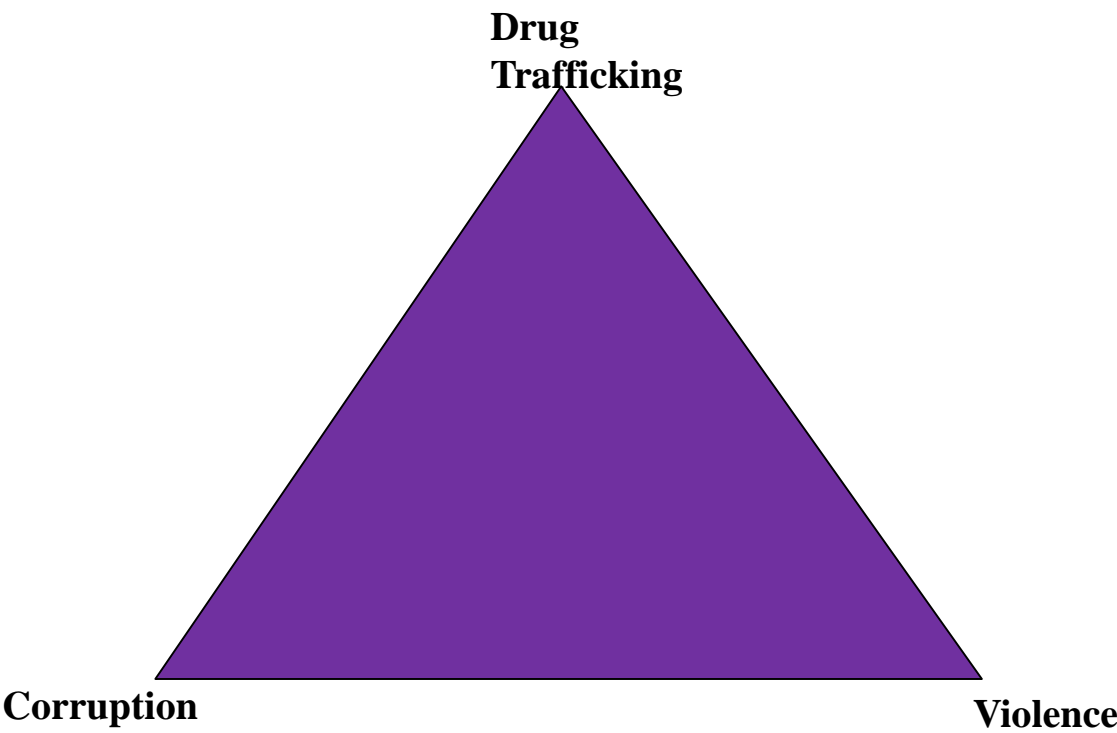
<http://blog.willis.com/2013/02/mexican-drugs-trade-fuels-continued-violence/>

Conclusion

Corruption and the drug trade while not a hundred percent connected have in some ways relied on the other in order to flourish. A mitigation strategy is needed in order to help the people of Mexico, this strategy is not a singular step it is a multifaceted, multi-stepped process that involves involvement from the regional community, various organizations, and everyday people of the world. Corruption may always exist but the idea of educating others and stopping the drug cartel's violence is necessary and this as previously mentioned means implementing new policies in both our international interactions with Mexico and within national policies related to the usage of drugs. As well it is important to continue to understand the process by which corruption grows and remember to study a topic from multiple perspectives or angles in order to receive as much data as possible. Mexico is just one nation where corruption rocks the populace to their core but if we are to implement strategies through a process together trust will be built and it could be possible to start programs that meet the needs of countries around the globe.

Research Findings

- Corruption is most commonly defined as “abuse of public office for private gain”.
- Mexico is a successful case study on this topic due to the fact that they have the markers for corruption, drug trafficking, and violence.
- Through the literature review it is possible to understand that there are frameworks in place that provide a strong understanding of the relationship between the three abovementioned criteria. Some relationships have a stronger consensus then others.
- Media can be used as an indicator for what is going on in a nation; this includes what events and situations are chosen to be covered or not.
- The textual analysis of The Washington Post yielded only a small result of 36 articles that referenced at least two of the search terms “corruption, drug trade, Mexico” during the period of January 1, 2014 to November 1, 2015; which on its own would be considered an insignificant sample. Due to the fact that both a literature review has been completed as well as the beginning processes of a textual analysis it is possible to be able to begin to fill the gap in the research. More work is needed in order to further confirm results.



Stephen D. Morris “Theoretical Puzzle”

Key Questions

- What is corruption and what are some of the identifying markers?
- What is the triangular relationship between drug trafficking, corruption, and violence?
- Why Mexico as a case study?
- What are some possible opportunities to decrease corruption?



Mexican Flag Wikipedia Images

Methodology

The analysis for my research was conducted through textual analysis by which there was a blending of primary and secondary sources of information in regards to corruption and the drug trade in Mexico. The use of varying source materials was done in order to concurrently have a scholarly perspective as well as a day to day perspective of the aforementioned topic. All research gathered on this topic was done through the University of Bridgeport's library database and the gathering of newspaper articles from “The Washington Post” online database. A gap in current scholarly research was found through this research, as many of the articles written on corruption and the drug trade though written between the search period of 2010-2015, referenced older material, thus a decision was made to provide an inter-disciplinary approach through a textual analysis of current newspaper articles from “The Washington Post” dated between January 1, 2014 and November 1, 2015. Some search results were pulled from the sample as they did not relate to the topic; such articles that were pulled involved presidential debates. All research was completed in the Fall 2015 semester at the University of Bridgeport. By completing both a literature review and a textual analysis it was possible to generate three suggestions for how corruption can be mitigated in Mexico.

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36 Washington Post articles that were used in the Textual Analysis section of my research